

The China Mail.

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HONGKONG, THURSDAY, 15TH MARCH, 1866.

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BIRTHS.

At Shanghai, on the 4th March, Mrs. J. P. ...

MARRIAGES.

At St. John's Cathedral, Hongkong, on the 15th March, by the Rev. John Wilson, ...

DEATHS.

Died at Nantes, (France), on the 3d January, 1866, ...

At Macao, on the 11th instant, from the effects of ...

At Hongkong, on the 11th March, MARY LORRAINE, ...

At Hongkong, on the 13th January, ...

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from the peculiar nature of the materials employed, but it seems desirable that endeavours should be made to construct them of sufficient solidity to resist the annual rains.

The question of police organization is yet unsettled. That the Indians employed do not come up to the necessary standard of efficiency is admitted by the officers of the force themselves. A large sum of money has been spent to house them in a somewhat ambitious way, while the personnel of the Corps, which, as it involves the protection of life and property in the Colony, is by far the most important consideration respecting police, has been somewhat neglected. The Colony of Hongkong has gained so world-wide and unenviable a reputation as the resort of Pirates, that we may expect to see stringent measures put in force for their suppression. The necessity of the Chinese population being placed under stringent regulations is daily becoming more manifest; at the present moment it is not safe for an individual to walk the streets at night without weapons, or for a small ship to leave the harbor unless well manned and armed—a state of affairs which sufficiently evinces the necessity for a complete reorganization of our arrangements for the prevention of crime.

The registration of the native servants has long been a desideratum, and we fully believe that were the opinion of all European residents to be taken on the matter, they would almost unanimously support the introduction of such a system. The insecurity at present prevailing is justly charged on the want of any efficient check upon or guarantee for the natives employed. The fact of a certain limit having been reached in the revenue derived from land sold will probably render some alterations in the present system of taxation necessary; while receipts derivable from that source will greatly depend on the method pursued in their collection. That grave complaints are constantly being made against the existing system is undoubted and some modification of the present regulations is imperatively necessary. Some time since a Commission was appointed to enquire in the subject, but the report furnished by them to the Government has not been made public.

The above are a few of the subjects which occur to us as those in which we may reasonably hope to see improvement made under an energetic administration. May the event justify our hopes.

A REPORT which has gained ground in the North of China respecting an Embassy which it is stated will shortly proceed from China to Europe calls for some remark beyond being merely announced in our columns of news. If true which we can hardly believe, it is an event calculated to affect in a powerful manner, the whole course of our future relations with China, and will very probably do more to break-down the barriers of traditional Chinese exclusiveness than anything which has as yet been effected by the efforts of Western diplomats or the force by which they were supported. It is difficult to conceive that a government which but seven years ago was issuing proclamations, in terms more abusive than any other nation has for centuries indulged in when alluding to its foes, should now be intending to despatch messengers to Europe, no longer as the representatives of a people which expects mankind to acknowledge its emperor as the light of the world, but one willing to learn from what it has been taught by experience is the superior grade of civilization reached by those whom it but lately so despised.

On the assumption that the news is true it is a matter of supreme importance to residents in China. It is to be hoped that the greatest care will be exercised by our representative in selecting one or more qualified gentlemen to accompany the mission to England. It is said that Mr. Wade and Mr. Hart will both proceed to England; but some one else is wanted, who, without possessing the official responsibility which would necessarily attach to these gentlemen, would as possessing a thoroughly competent knowledge of the language and customs of the Chinese, be able to interest them and in inform them respecting the numerous and by no means unimportant differences which distinguish the daily and inner life of the West from that of China; to accompany them in their minor visits and be

able to lead them a little more behind scenes than the opportunities afforded by a visit for state purposes only would permit; and at the same time exercise a constant and powerful check on that absurd spirit of credulity and curiosity on the part of our own countrymen which led to a coolie being honoured at the Great Exhibition as a noble on the ground that "some one" had called him a "Mandarin." It is on this latter point that we apprehend the most danger from, and most unsatisfactory results of the proposed mission. The people of our own and other Western countries are so prone to "Lionise" anything strange which visits their shores that it is much to be feared that the officials sent will return with an inflated notion of their own importance, instead of having learnt that there are others in the world who can bear favourable comparison with the inhabitants of the middle Kingdom.

It must be observed, however, that there is at present no certain ground for believing in the truth of the report as now circulated. From private sources we are given to understand that the so-called "embassy" or "mission" is to be despatched in a way which would at once deprive it of the high official character claimed for it by the Shanghai papers. The scheme originally proposed was at all events of a much less extensive character than the present intention of the Chinese Government may be. It appears that Mr. Hart suggested that some intelligent official of sufficiently high rank and character to make their opinions of weight should accompany him to England in charge of the pupils now studying European languages at Peking. The latest private letters from the North stated that Mr. Hart's proposition had been approved of by the Tsung-li-yamen or Board of Foreign Affairs, and that certain officers had been selected and ordered to hold themselves in readiness to proceed to England in a short time. We are therefore inclined to believe that this is the true account, but should be glad to find ourselves mistaken.

It is worthy of remark that the pupils under instruction at Peking are all of them from a very low class of the community. This as regards their prospects of advancement in the Government service is of but small importance, but it strikes us that a better guarantee for the success of the attempt to secure good trustworthy interpreters would have been obtained had the allied representatives insisted when they had the power, on a selection being made from the children of men occupying well known important official posts, instead of leaving the matter entirely to the Chinese themselves. Had such a step been taken, a certain section of the officials would have been forced to take a personal interest in the matter, whereas now, no importance is attached to the effort by any except the members of the foreign board, who would be only too glad to hear of its breaking down and thus compelling us to use our own interpreters and the Chinese language in all matters of official communication.

Whatever may be the true state of the case we shall await its announcement, with much interest. We have purposely abstained from touching on any but the personal results involved in the scheme as at present reported reserving any remarks on the modification of our political relations which it may cause until we learn what is actually going to be done.

The office of a journalist is naturally an ungrateful one. His position towards the public is such, that in the discussion of questions involving great interests to which it may fairly be presumed he gives his best attention, he is liable to be credited with "envy hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness" while simply desirous of exposing on public grounds such errors on the part of others as tend to damage either the interests of the country he resides in, or those of his fellow countrymen at large.

Editors are popularly supposed to be rather fond of a quarrel in print, as when times are dull, it affords room for remarks etc., which tend to make the journals they conduct more piquant to read. With respect to the subject which we are about to touch upon, we can honestly disclaim any such feeling on our part; and we again allude to it simply from a desire to draw attention to, and enquiry into the matter, on the part of our home readers. That most residents in China, (except the body attacked), will

care little to read anything more respecting the present state of Missionary labour and labourers we are prepared to hear; and we therefore claim the indulgence of the public while we offer some more remarks on this subject.

It is with no slight regret that we observe the tone taken by a late correspondent of the *Daily Press* who, under the signature of "CHINA," replies at great length to the remarks which appeared respecting missionaries in our last issue of the *China Mail*. Our regret is based on the fact that so feeble and intemperate a vindicator should have come forward on behalf of his class; as could conclusive proof be adduced that our strictures were undeserved and that the general lay opinion throughout China is erroneous, we should not only have rejoined, as having the real interests of Christianity and civilization at heart, but should have been conscious that as the (so considered) unjust aspersions cast on the missionaries, had been triumphantly disproved, and their excellence made manifest to the world, we had rendered them the greatest service which it is within the power of the press to confer.

As we before intimated we took up the matter on conscientious grounds. No personal feelings have influenced us, as we have not had the (good or bad) fortune to have quarrelled with, or receive ill treatment from, any members of the profession. And we now proceed to notice the letter of "CHINA" in order to give yet another illustration of the one of the statements we advanced, viz; the want of "discretion" evinced by some of the missionaries' best and well meaning though foolish defenders.

The gist of the remarks we offered in the article objected to by "CHINA" was, first, that there were clerical quacks—one species of which we defined. Secondly that objectionable practices in the way of gross untidiness, a want of sufficient knowledge of English or any other language, an intrusive interference with secular matters with which they had no concern, and a defiance of Treaty regulations, characterized certain specimens of the class. Thirdly, that it was necessary for missionaries to possess a capability of securing the outward respect at least of the Europeans with whom they were brought into contact; and finally we expressed a hope that the missionary societies would take great pains in the selection of the men they sent out.

"CHINA" commences his reply by stating that "hostility to missionary operations is a new element in journalism." This hardly bears on the point at issue, as we expressed ourselves favourable to missionary work, but hostile to the quacks to be found among the missionaries in China. He then shows his knowledge of history by a slight sketch of the Moravian and West Indian missions, some rather discursive remarks relative to India, New Zealand and Captain Cook, and having touched at California finally returns to China and begins to talk about the Editor of the *Evening Mail*.

Now it must be born in mind that the primary question at issue is:—Are there or are there not missionaries in China who do not come up to the proper standard of qualifications and acquirement? So that the paragraphs we have noticed, do not seem to have much to do with the matter. However "patience" and we shall doubtless find out the meaning in time.

The charge against the missionaries, whose business it is to have a good knowledge of their own language and literature, a very good acquaintance with theology, and a thorough command of Chinese before attempting to preach to the people in a dialect so liable to cause mistakes by the speaker—(on account of the difficulties presented by the tones, the slightest mispronunciation frequently making utter nonsense),—is disposed of (?) in the following way:—

"We would even go further, and call upon the Editor to write us (without appeal to a Dictionary) a letter in a single language besides his own; or to write down the symbols of the 63 elements without reference to a book; or we shall be happy to examine him in international law, or treaties which establish precedents for the guidance of the nations of the West. Let him, who accuses others of ignorance, merely pass an examination on Chinese affairs, and we are sure he will run with us across the glaciers of the Himalayas and slip up in future along the Electric Telegraph through the inhospitable regions of the west until we are lost in our own bewilderment and wonder what has become of us."

So that supposing an Editor not to have an acquaintance with five subjects which it

is not his business to know, he has no right, according to the logical correspondent under notice, to find fault with missionaries who do not know two things which it is their business to know. The kind offer, to examine us in various points must be declined, as the examination would be so terribly puzzling if it in any way resembled the composition we are reviewing. We resist the chance of becoming personal, relative to our own acquirements, but would remark that to challenge us to write even Hebrew, would not disprove the fact of missionaries being untidy, or wanting in knowledge of theology and Chinese.

The next paragraph must be quoted at length as it contains a statement which we are surprised to find that our acute correspondent has enunciated; it runs as follows:—

"Returning to the dresses of the missionaries, we acknowledge, that there are some who do not appear as others would have them, but what has that to do with their usefulness? The Chinese are too much of peacocks, and more prone to imitate extravagance than virtue. We do not believe there is a single Chinaman who is as clean as the dirtiest missionary, and as there is not a native who is perfectly free from vermin, there is not a single missionary who is suffering from that curse of Paganism. (Vide Yeh's voyage to Calcutta.) The missionary who, single minded and devoted to his cause, sits among the natives, differing little from them in the quality of his dress, is the happiest of all, and does more good than the 'touch-me-not' models of the Editor of the *Evening Mail*."

To the first question, "What has that to do with their usefulness?" we reply—a good deal. We have ourselves heard the Chinese notice the shabbiness of various missionaries they have met, in contrast to the merchants and others at the same place. Want of respect necessarily induces want of influence.

To call a Chinaman a 'peacock' is really too bad for it there is any title undeserved by them it is this; their fault not being as a rule a tendency to overdress. The fact of "CHINA" believing that there is not a single Chinaman as clean as the dirtiest missionary" will convey to the minds of all who have any acquaintance with high caste Chinese what amount of knowledge the writer possesses of the subject on which he treats. It is evident that he has never seen or at least associated with Chinese who occupy the same social position in China as the Clergy do in England. We expressed a hope that the missionary societies would take great pains in the selection of the men they sent out.

"CHINA" commences his reply by stating that "hostility to missionary operations is a new element in journalism." This hardly bears on the point at issue, as we expressed ourselves favourable to missionary work, but hostile to the quacks to be found among the missionaries in China. He then shows his knowledge of history by a slight sketch of the Moravian and West Indian missions, some rather discursive remarks relative to India, New Zealand and Captain Cook, and having touched at California finally returns to China and begins to talk about the Editor of the *Evening Mail*.

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glish nobility, as we can easily imagine that the members of it whom "CHINA" has associated with, were as he states. We regret that similar fortune has not befallen ourselves, as we should then be able to endorse his statement.

To the next paragraph we would request the special attention of our readers. It is such an unexpected testimony of the truth of our remarks that it has fairly astonished us:—

"And as to the missionary of whom the Editor draws a picture and whom he holds forward, as a model specimen of that class of men, we are sorry to say, that the same person was dismissed by his society more than 12 years ago. He is, so far as we know, the only missionary of those who came out to China, who was dismissed for reasons which we need not explain here. This fact must have been known to the Editor, or he must have been aware that the person has no intercourse with the other missionaries; though we are not aware that at this moment he does anything but what is good and Christian. The Editor of the *Evening Mail* speaks of the missionaries in the plural number. Being challenged he comes out with a picture of one who has ceased to be a paid missionary. We leave it to the public to decide, whether or not that is fair play. It only reminds us of some mistaken notion of certain individuals who think it fashionable to write against the missionaries. The defence of the Editor's picture is the following:—(A single tortoise is not unlike the following:—A single merchant in China may have been a swindler, and a person hearing of it, calls the whole mercantile community swindlers. Being called to account, the good man tells us, he only meant the swindlers; and these not existing in a plurality, he draws the picture of one who had long been struck from the list of the fraternity."

We can most honestly assure our readers that we were utterly unaware that any such individual was in existence. We can further avow that the persons we spoke of are at this moment in the full possession of their offices and salaries and that the cases we spoke of had fallen under our own personal observation, within the last four years! No challenge was given that we are aware of to produce this sort of person, now were our remarks in any sense a "defence." In fact we rather fancy that they were much stronger than those which preceded them.

We will now continue our quotation:— "There is one more word to which we must draw the attention of the public, and that is a 'missionary quack.' So far as we are informed, we understand under term quack unprofessional men, charlatans who practise an art or profession without having qualified themselves according to the established law of the country. Missionaries, whether their respective duties may be, have qualified themselves before a Board of professional men, or before Royal Commissioners, and are sent out by their respective Boards with instructions defining their duties, and are accredited to respectable houses, where they may draw their salary." Exactly so: It is on the "respective Boards" that we wish to impress the "error of their ways" in sending out so unsuitable a class of men; as to their salaries, the fact of their being drawn from respectable houses does not affect the question of acquirements in the least.

So much for what is termed the "preposterous presumption" of ourselves. We have undertaken the task of exposing the letter which purports to be a refutation of the charges we have made, simply to shew the style of defence set up by the advocates of the present system. Our strictures on the class are met with "you're another" of schoolboy argument, and it is sufficient in the eyes of Chinese to assert that we are "ignorant and of no reputation" to prove that the missionaries are all that they should be. As we before said we wish well to real missionary labourers; but let us imagine the writer of "CHINA's" letter being called upon to combat the fallacies of acute Chinese sophists, and then let us ask ourselves whether the result would tend to the advancement of Christianity, and the credit of the champion who has thus valiantly annihilated our poor selves and earned a title to the gratitude (?) of his brethren in China.

No corroboration has arrived of the extraordinary Telegram sent from Galle announcing the dismissal of the Inspector General of Chinese Maritime Customs, and the probability is, so far as we can judge here, that the announcement was based, by some careless telegraph clerk on a passage which appeared in the Overland Summary of the *China Mail* anticipating such an event. Be that as it may, the telegrams of Chinese intelligence sent from Galle are usually most perplexing. Often no sense can be got out of them, and when they have a meaning, that meaning is ill-selected. One might think also that the telegraph clerk had specially in view the glorification of Sir Rutherford Alcock and Sir Harry Parkes, rather than the conveyance of sound and authentic news.

LONDON, 26th January, 1866.

